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Blessed Are Ye That Searve



Mat. Luke x. 30-37



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He Had Compassion On Him

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”—Luke x. 30-37.

The Good Samaritan

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"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."—Psalm LXXXV. 10.

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THE road from Jerusalem to Jericho was the most dangerous descent in Palestine. According to Josephus, the greater part of Herod's forty thousand workmen dismissed from the temple became thieves, robbers and murderers, lurking in dens and caves of the earth, ready at any moment to fall upon the defenseless traveler. Part of the road was known as "the path of blood" because so much blood had been shed there. Here in clear daylight an innocent man was brutally attacked, stripped, robbed and with one violent blow on the head left alone on the hard rocky wayside to bleed and die.

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While the wounds were still fresh and bleeding, a priest came along. He had been conducting the temple service—offering sacrifices, blessing the people. And now he was returning to his home in Jericho. Possibly he felt the need of a month's rest. Maybe he was afraid of pollution. Probably he thought of his affectionate wife and family awaiting his return. At any rate, he hurried past the dying man, making a sharp curve and glancing back—just enough to see his shadow, or to get

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dust in his eyes from a passing gust. Then, all of a sudden, he heard the robbers' footsteps behind an overhanging rock. A shake of the head, a quick turn, a few swift steps, and he is far down the rugged winding path.

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A few moments later followed a Levite. He had been assisting the priest: ministering before the ark of the Lord, instructing about the song, shutting and opening the gates. He belonged to the official class of priests. He had rank, religion, and descent in his favor. He could recite the Book of Deuteronomy. So he drew near: got his name and abode; noted the amount of money stolen; also ways and means of arresting the robbers; and wondered if he had believed in God, or in a future life, or had been circumcised. Then he offered a little prayer, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are"; at the same time, getting uneasy lest he should be responsible for the burial, and possibly accused of the murder. So, with a shrug of the shoulders, he too passed by on the other side, leaving the dying man an easy prey for the vultures.

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Soon after a Samaritan rode up. He was hastening to the Holy City on important business. The priest and the Levite had just cursed him as they passed by, avoiding his shadow. And he had been taught from his

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youth up to show hate for hate, to repay insult with insult—the most unlikely foreigner to do a friendly turn, and particularly to a Jew. And yet, how amazing! The first glimpse he got of the helpless sufferer, “he had compassion on him.” He had no time to brood over past enmities and hatreds and revenges, no time to blame the priest or the Levite, no time to arrest the robbers, no time to put his money to the exchangers—here was a human being bleeding to death. Quickly alighting and springing to his side and greeting him with a kiss, he put his robe of fine linen and his strong arms about him, saying, “What is the matter, my good brother—let me assist you.” Gently raising his head, he poured a little fruit of the vine down his throat to revive him, a little in the open gashes to cleanse and stanch the blood, a little oil on the sores and bruises to deaden the pain, the last drops on the coarse bandages—strips torn from his own garment—to make them soft. Carefully bringing the sides together, he bound up the wounds. Then, lifting him to his shoulders, he placed him on his own beast, and journeyed up the steep ascent under the burning sun,—walking alongside and watching wistfully—one hand guiding the ass, the other supporting the injured man whose blood dripped down upon his rent garment,—until they reached an inn—the nearest and best. And then he sat by the lonely couch through the long, silent, sleepless watches of the night with infinite patience and tenderness, giving him loving

thought and care, moistening his parched lips and wiping away the great drops of sweat that stood out upon his brow, awaiting his return to consciousness,—just like the great physician whose strong, rich personality is the best medicine—that was what saved his life. And the next day he paid for the privilege, paid for himself and friend, two days' income—all the money he had. Indeed, he gave a pledge: assured all the money he needed, until he was perfectly well. He even vowed to come back again over the perilous road—doubtless to save other dying men; promised to be his brave, true friend for evermore. Then he said to the host in leaving, "I thank you very very much," and hastened on up the rocky steep with a merry heart and lifting up his voice with joy, making sweet melody and singing a new song unto the Lord.

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WHAT a wonderful picture of true human kindness and brotherliness! And all the more wonderful and beautiful when one considers that the good foreigner is present today in every land, among every people, representing every class and color and creed and condition of life, just as thoughtful and brave and unselfish as the Samaritan of old, making a new and a better world; crossing quietly and unobserved to the same side, getting close to those who are down and lifting them up after priests and Levites glance at, look on, and pass by on the other side. The church sings, "Onward, Christian

soldiers," and abandons the foreign district, passing by poverty, vice, disease and death. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Trusted leaders make light of strong drink, malice, greed and violence; utter only a few pious phrases and empty platitudes, leaving the helpless multitudes to be exploited and preyed upon by pitiless pirates. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Kings and rulers graciously accept all the generous service of the one who comes to the back door and does the menial labor, but never enter her humble home,—except to send letters from the top story of a great building, or scatter neat little tracts from above,—experts at giving advice, but woefully lacking in association, in friendliness and in love. "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you!" Unjust stewards, holy indeed on Sunday shaking the dust off their shoes, but never for one moment during the week shaking the injustice and oppression out of their business. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

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On the contrary, the foreigner cleans our streets, mends our garments, whitens our linen, shines our shoes,

digs our sewers, runs our factories, builds our railroads—does the arduous tasks we will not do. “In all labor there is profit”. After a great earthquake when the books and records were destroyed, it was the honest foreigner who came forward and paid up all his debts; who would not begin the New Year owing anything; who could truly say: “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” In an over-crowded car, it is the courteous foreigner who stands, after a hard day’s toil, “esteeming other better than themselves.” In a free dispensary, it is the grateful foreigner who grasps the surgeon’s hand and presses it to her lips while tears of gratitude trickle down her tanned and wrinkled cheeks for rescuing her from pain and death, regretting that she cannot do more. When Jesus healed ten lepers, only one turned back to give thanks: and he was a foreigner. He is not often counted great, but he is good and goodness is mightier than greatness. “What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

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WHEN Jesus had finished His wonderful story, the lawyer could no longer say, “And who is my neighbor?” And our chief glory, if we are not slow to see the good in other lives, is to be the good neighbor, to live the good life, to be “debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” “In

that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree." All are children of the same heavenly Father, and brethren of the same household, and destined to an immortal existence; all are one great family of God—one in nature, one in need, and one in hope of a better life. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." All are travelers therefore upon the highway of life. Insane hatred, cruel lust, savage butchery and half dead victims plead for tremendous sympathy and care. There are other ways more inviting and winsome for quitters, shirkers, slackers, deserters and traitors, but the good neighbor always travels "the path of blood" and "takes care of him": Always gets off that a needier one may ride; always puts a fine robe and strong arms beneath the wounded and the dying; always sits up through the long, silent sleepless watches of the night that others may retire; always gives away the last coin that no debts go unpaid; always returns that way again for a friend that needs attention. "And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

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The noble country maiden, brought up in the back woods, works her way through night school, college and the university, and then deprives herself of a happy

home to carry a ray of sunshine to a dark continent. The educated lady, surrounded with wealth and culture and refinement, hears the cry of sorrowing races and spends her life endeavoring to plant an ideal home, to convey a little of the sweetness of life to the heart of poverty and wretchedness and woe. The brave young girl, a lover of her kind, devotes the best part of her days to the tender care of a dear declining loved one with whom she would not part for all the world. The skilful surgeon, after finishing his course at the greatest cost and labor, risks his life—every moment of it—with dreadful disease, to bring relief and comfort to suffering mankind. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” The generous rich, without applause or prospect of reward, give away millions of healing dollars to build our churches, hospitals, asylums, sanatoria and shelters, sorrowing in others’ adversity and living for others’ welfare. The good man puts on his desk every morning something to give away during the day—a bill, a coin, a book, a garment—always something, investing his precious treasure in human hearts. “Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?” The unselfish patriot treads with solemn pride the heroic path of duty; he suffers the most terrible disaster for the common good; and his last words are words of exquisite beauty and tenderness. “Greater love hath no

man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

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HOW wonderful just to go about making people happy! Long after we have gone home to the Father's house, long after this earth has crumbled into dust, long after sun and moon and stars have passed away, the kind thought, the gentle touch, the little courtesy, the unselfish deed will continue to shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. As this matchless parable will never die, neither will the smallest cup of cold water given in the Master's name lose its reward. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

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The good nurse takes to her own home an infant orphan. She watches patiently and prayerfully during the critical moments of the child's life. She gives him a true affection worth infinitely more than words can tell. The boy grows up under her tender care, passes out into the larger life; has a brilliant career at school, in college and in the university. He is no child of hers, but those affectionate eyes follow his bright course day by day. She never hopes to share his renown; but every hour his name is on her lips. She searches every paper to find some mention of his praise. She wonders if he will ever return her way again. By and by it is the time of her sickness and pain and death. He gets the news;

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and from that far-away place of his fame sends the message, "I am coming, Dear." And he comes. Comes to bring peace and joy and hope; comes to bid a last good-bye; comes to follow her hearse to the grave; comes to see her beautiful form laid away to its last resting-place; comes because he has a true glory—humbly beautiful and grand—in the great, brave angel of mercy who meant so much to him—eternal resurrection, life and joy.

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"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

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Blessed Are Ye That Serve

